

Serial No.: 10/817,020
Amendment Dated: July 1, 2005
In Response to Office Action dated June 15, 2005

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 – 8 (canceled)

9. (original) A method of sewing a thick fabric material, comprising:
moving the fabric material through a sewing station and penetrating the fabric material with a sewing needle;
as the sewing needle penetrates the fabric material, moving a presser foot against an upper surface of the fabric material in timed relation with the movement of the sewing needle through the fabric material;
at about the same time, engaging an actuator to apply an additional compressive force to the presser foot as needed to sufficiently compress the fabric material for sewing;
deactivating the actuator as the sewing needle begins a return stroke to release the additional compressive force from the presser foot;
moving the presser foot away from the upper surface of the fabric material; and

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engaging and moving the fabric material forwardly through the sewing station.

10. (original) The method of claim 9 and wherein moving the presser foot against the upper surface of the fabric material comprises driving an eccentric linked to a presser foot lift lever off a main drive of the sewing station.
11. (original) The method of claim 9 and wherein engaging and moving the fabric material comprises moving a top feed dog into engagement with the upper surface of the fabric material and pulling the fabric material forwardly.
12. (original) The method of claim 11 and wherein the fabric material is advanced incrementally though the sewing station.
13. (original) The method of claim 9 and further comprising applying a nominal biasing force to maintain the presser foot in engagement with the upper surface of the fabric material.
14. (original) The method of claim 9 and further comprising adjusting the additional compressive force applied to the presser foot.

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15. (original) The method of claim 9 and wherein the fabric material is compressed an amount sufficient to ensure that the sewing needle penetrates the fabric material to a point at which a thread carried by the needle will be engaged by a looper of the sewing station.

16. (original) A method of sewing a work piece having an increased thickness, comprising:
 - inserting a sewing needle carrying a thread into the work piece;
 - moving a presser foot into compressive engagement against an upper surface of the work piece in timed relation with the movement of the needle into and through the work piece;
 - applying a compressive force with the presser foot so as to compress the work piece to a level sufficient to ensure penetration of the needle through the work piece to a depth at which the thread carried by the needle will be engaged by a looper;
 - releasing the compressive force and moving the presser foot away from the upper surface of the work piece in timed relation with a return stroke of the needle; and
 - engaging and advancing the work piece forwardly to advance the sewing operation for the work piece.

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17. (original) The method of claim 16 and wherein engaging and moving the fabric material comprises moving a top feed dog into engagement with the upper surface of the fabric material and pulling the fabric material forwardly.
18. (original) The method of claim 17 and wherein the fabric material is advanced incrementally though the sewing station.
19. (original) The method of claim 16 and further comprising adjusting the additional compressive force applied to the presser foot.
20. (original) The method of claim 16 and wherein applying a compressive force comprises engaging an actuator to apply additional pressure to the presser foot against the work piece as needed to compress the work piece.
21. (original) The method of claim 16 and wherein applying a compressive force comprises exerting a biasing force against the presser foot so as to urge the presser foot downwardly against the work piece.
22. (original) The method of claim 21 and wherein releasing the compressive force comprises engaging an actuator to urge the presser foot upwardly against the biasing force applied to the presser foot.